THE

CHRISTIAN FREEMAN.

Vol. IV.] SEPTEMBER, 1836. [No. XLVII.

ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERIAN SECESSION SYNOD.

In the notice of the proceedings of this reverend body, which appeared in our last number, we promised to embrace an early opportunity of adverting to its decisions with reference to the Moral Philosophy Class in Belfast College. Two distinct documents from the Joint Boards of the College were laid before the Synod at its meeting in July. The first contained a proposition for establishing a professorship of Christian Ethics, with a view to accommodate such students as may be directed not to attend the present professor of Moral Philosophy. This proposition had received from the Boards the most mature consideration, and they had proceeded so far as to submit it to the General Synod of Ulster, at its recent meeting in Omagh. In the interval between this and the first sitting of the Presbyterian Secession Synod, the annual meeting of the proprietors of the Belfast Institution had taken place, and they refused, for the present, to confirm the proposition of the Joint Boards. The proprietors further directed, that the religious bodies who have expressed public dissatisfaction with the teachings of Professor Ferrie, be severally requested to appoint committees to confer with the Joint Boards, that the guardians of the College may ascertain the precise wants and wishes of these bodies. The second of the documents laid before our Synod embraced the latter plan, calling on the Synod to appoint a committee for the above purpose. It must have appeared somewhat awkward to find two distinct, and in some respects opposite plans, emanating from the same quarter, and relating to the same object. Doubts might have been started, and difficulties raised by any who entertained feelings of hostility to the College. But such feelings do not exist in the

Presbyterian Secession Synod. The result, on this occasion, affords a triumphant evidence of the esteem in which home education and the Belfast College are held by the members of Synod.

After some explanations by Messrs. Edgar and Wilson, respecting the anxiety of the Boards to effect a satisfactory arrangement of the difficulties at present attending the Moral Philosophy Class, it was unanimously resolved that a committee be appointed to confer with the Managers of the Institution; and the Synod expressed a confident expectation, that, for the ensuing session, the College would succeed in providing for the students a sound course of morals and metaphysics. In pursuance of this resolution, the following members were appointed a committee to conduct the conferences with the Joint Boards:—Rev. Messrs. Professor Edgar, David Stuart, Thomas Heron, Thomas Millar, Walter Moffat, John Coulter, Robert Wilson. At the adjourned meeting in Armagh, Mr. Wilson was appointed convener, and instructed to communicate with the Rev. John Paul of Carrickfergus, who had written to the Synod on the subject, anxious for mutual advice and co-operation. We augur a happy termination in this affair. For the Presbyterian Secession Synod we can say, that it is most anxious to maintain connexion with the Royal Institution. We know the Synod will never consent to a compromise of its own principles, and that it will continue to exercise a vigilant and faithful guardianship over the students committed to its care: but we know, also, that throughout its members kind feeling towards the Institution predominates; and we are confident that this kind feeling will be reciprocated, and therefore we do not despair of a speedy and satisfactory adjustment of all differences. The committee nominated by the Synod will act at once kindly and conscientiously, and we shall feel grievously disappointed in the Institution, if, consistently with its fundamental principles, it leave any thing undone to meet the views of its old and firm supporters. It would be, doubtless, unwise to precipitate a final arrangement; but no time should be lost in obtaining such a Professor of Moral Philosophy as may possess the confidence of the great religious bodies of Ulster.

On Tuesday, the 16th of August, and the two following days, the Synod, pursuant to adjournment, held its meeting in Armagh. The first subject of discussion related to the conduct of the Committee of examination and superintendence. The report for the past year was brought up and read by Mr. Wilson (Belfast), the Secretary. It gave, in general,

a favourable account of the character and attainments of the students under the inspection of the body. The great bulk of them had made, during the last session, very creditable proficiency, and had passed their public examinations in a manner highly satisfactory. One department of the labours of the Committee, is to examine young men previously to their entrance into the Divinity Hall. This examination embraces doctrinal theology, practical religion, and views to the ministry. Some of those who appeared as candidates for admission to the Hall at November, failed in obtaining the approbation of the Committee. Considerable excitement prevailed in some quarters, in consequence of the dissemination of carricaturish reports about the character of the examination to which the young men submitted. The flame was spread more widely by means of a pamphlet published by the Rev. David M'Kee, (a member of the Committee) containing much solid excellence, but evincing a rashness, and a severity towards his brethren, very unusual with that good and gifted man. There was also a protest, with a string of reasons in support of it, by the Messrs. Bridge, and Rev. John Lowry, with some elders who are connected with their congregations. The protesters were first heard in support of their views; afterwards the members of the Committee spoke in defence and illustration of the conduct which they had pursued; and then the Synod proceeded to give judgment on the entire case. The debate was conducted on both sides with much ability, and, with very few exceptions, in a spirit of kindness and courtesy which did honour to the body. We refer not merely to the speakers by whom the Committee was fearlessly and triumphantly defended; our observation includes also the greater number of those who doubted its propriety, or were prepared to oppose its measures. One or two members may have attempted low personalities, but they are not likely to attempt them again. The feeling of the house, and the energy of its Moderator, were not long in strangling such attempts. Personalities are dangerous weapons. They "come thundering back on the defenceless head" of him who uses them.

Another circumstance which afforded us unmingled gratification, was the great candour, and even *unanimity*, which characterized this interesting debate. It may seem strange to speak of unanimity in a debate at all. We will explain. In bodies, both civil and religious, a discussion usually awakens the elements of strife, and in many cases brings out differences of which neither side had dreamed. We are acquainted with

bodies to which this remark applies with full force; so that the longer the debate lasts the greater diversity of sentiment is proved to prevail. Now the very opposite was ascertained to be true in the Presbyterian Secession Synod. Misrepresentations of different kinds had gone abroad respecting the Examination Committee, rendering the fullest inquiry into all its proceedings absolutely necessary; and we cordially rejoice that the inquiry took place, and that it was conducted with the keenest and most searching scrutiny. As the debate progressed, parties were drawing nearer and nearer to the point of coalescence. A doubt or difficulty regarding the Committee once removed, members had the courage and candour to dispel it from their minds for ever. In some instances where we ourselves feared discord, our ears were agreeably surprised by the sound of harmony. We feel, therefore, justified in affirming that the debate was conducted not only with meekness and moderation, but in the essential spirit of unanimity; and we are bold to confess, that it has rendered still dearer to us our beloved Secession Church.

Another feature which we are unwilling to pass over in silence, was the refreshing soundness evinced by the eldership on the religious department of ministerial education. This department, they hesitated not to declare, had been efficiently attended to by the Committee; and several of them concluded a series of weighty and pointed observations by proposing, that the Committee should receive the public thanks of the Synod. It was truly cheering, as a member remarked in court, to witness among the elders such a healthy religious feeling, and such Christian decision in support of an agency which promises to confer innumerable blessings upon the church.

At the close of the debate, it was moved, and carried by a large majority, that the Committee be retained; not, indeed, the individual members who had officiated last year, but *the Committee* for the purposes specified at the time of its original appointment in 1833. We were pleased to find Mr. M'Kee voting with the majority, and thus giving his distinct testimony in favour of such a Committee. For ourselves, we look upon it as one of the most effective engines for the promotion of practical piety, and the advancement, generally, of ministerial character, which the church has at present under her command. Thus was this important question issued on Wednesday evening, at six o'clock, after a debate of two days, during which many admirable speeches were delivered, which want of space prevents us from noticing even in meagre outline.

Synod met again at seven o'clock, and proceeded to nominate the Committee for the current year, and to fix the time and place of meeting. At the express wish of the members for last year, few or none of them were appointed. It was agreed that each Presbytery should nominate two members, which was done, an elder to accompany each; and the first meeting of the Committee was appointed to be held in Cookstown, we believe, on the second Tuesday of October. The second meeting will be held at the close of the Divinity Hall, and the third in the end of April, at the close of the Collegiate Session in the Royal Belfast College. These two meetings will, of course, take place in Belfast.

It is but justice to the Synod to state, that on all hands—among those who defended, and among those who opposed the Committee—there was the most perfect agreement respecting the necessity of practical piety in the candidates for the ministry of the Gospel; a converted ministry all held to be indispensable to the well-being of the church of Christ. There was no minister, there was no elder to breathe a syllable against the importance and value of vital godliness in him who is invested with the sacred office. There is no difference here. But there is some difference respecting the best means of attaining the object which all, without exception, admit to be so desirable. Some hold that it can be best effected by Presbyteries alone; others, and we confess ourselves to be of the number, are convinced that the examination Committee is of essential service in assisting Presbyteries. We desire not to take the business out of the hands of Presbyteries. Far from it. No, no; let them give all diligence in superintending the religious education of our students. There is work enough for both *them* and the Committee. We have some experience of the Committee and of Presbyteries too; and while we say not a word against the latter, we are fully satisfied of the excellence and necessity of the former. We feel inclined to apply to them the Scottish proverb, "Baith's best;" and as they have a common object in view, and that object one of the noblest—to train up candidates for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ—we entertain the confident hope, that Presbyteries and Committee will go forward as a band of brothers. The proceedings of the adjourned meeting of Synod we receive as a token for good, and we gladly expect that for the future, "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."

On Thursday the Synod disposed of several bills which had

been held over from the meeting in Belfast. These embraced chiefly matters of local interest, which it is unnecessary to lay before our readers. Rev. Messrs. Professor Edgar, Moffat, and Coulter, the Committee appointed to make arrangements for the class of Biblical Criticism, in connexion with the Synod, brought up their report. It recommended that, in accordance with the deed of Synod last year, the students be required to attend the prelections on Biblical Criticism the same sessions that they attend Divinity, and that one hour each day be devoted to the class. The report further stated that in reply to an application to the Joint Boards of the Royal Belfast Institution, for accommodation within its walls, the Boards had not only acceded to the request of the Committee, but had further proposed to confer on Mr. Wilson, the Professor of Biblical Criticism, a seat in the literary faculty of the Institution. The Synod approved of the report, and made such other arrangements as appeared to them to be necessary for having the class opened at the first of November.

In the course of this day (Thursday), Rev. Mr. Knill, who laboured some time in India, and for a considerable period in Russia, delivered before the Synod one of the finest missionary addresses it has been our privilege to hear. At the conclusion of it, the thanks of the body were given to Mr. Knill, through the Moderator, for his very excellent address. On the motion of Mr. Miller, Cookstown, it was unanimously resolved that the Synod should have a school in India, and £10, the sum necessary to support it annually, was subscribed and paid in a few seconds. Rev. Mr. Hawthorne, Tandragee, also subscribed £10, on his own account, for the support of another school in India. From the feelings expressed by members on this happy occasion, as well as from the substantial evidence of their attachment to the cause of Missions, we anticipate the most blessed results. May God revive his work among us, sending us times of refreshing from his gracious presence, that the religion of the cross may be appreciated and practised at home, and that "the far heathen" may be made savingly acquainted with the unsearchable riches of Christ. We heartily wish Mr. Knill God speed. He is a powerful and effective advocate of the Missionary enterprize.

At four o'clock, on Thursday, Synod was closed with prayer by the Moderator, to meet in Alfred-street new meeting-house, on the first Tuesday in July, 1837.

A Reporter.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."—Rom. viii. 16.

MANY of the misconceptions and misinterpretations of this passage may be cleared away in the outset, by observing the language in which it is expressed. It does not tell us that the Spirit itself beareth witness *to* our spirit, that we are the children of God. The Spirit makes no such discovery to our souls, by any immediate and direct communication. Believers experience no fresh revelation from above, attesting their interest in the salvation of the Gospel. Nothing of the kind is expressed in the passage which is commonly quoted to prove it.

But the Spirit itself beareth witness *with* our spirit that we are the children of God. Such was the language of the early Christians, and Christians in our own day can use it too. It implies, when correctly read, no voice direct from the upper sanctuary, no supplementary revelation to the soul, no new inspiration secretly conveyed to the inner man, in impressions or in whispers from above. It sanctions nothing of wild enthusiasm, or religious frenzy. All is calm and sober in the views which it presents, agreeable to right reason, and consistent with the general representations of Scripture. A brief examination of the verse will lead us into what I shall venture to call the true theory of Christian experience.

If the Spirit of God bears witness *with* our spirits, it will easily appear that our spirits themselves must bear witness, so that the Spirit of God may join his testimony with theirs. And by what process do our spirits arrive at the momentous conclusion that we are the children of God? I shall describe it. The Bible contains a faithful portrait of the Christian. Every feature, every expression of countenance, every attitude and aspect, are touched off to the very life. The pencil of inspiration has furnished us, in short, with a perfect likeness. Now this likeness is held up to our view in the Scriptures, that we may compare ourselves with it. Let us therefore take up its different features one by one, and inquire, with all the earnestness which such an awfully important investigation demands, whether we can discover a counterpart to each in our hearts and lives. Faith is one feature—and do we believe in the name of the Son of God? Love is another—and can we

say with a penitent disciple, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee?" Humility is a third—and have we learned of Him who was meek and lowly? Zeal, devotedness, resignation, and all the other graces of the Spirit, are features of the Christian—and are we conscious before God that these are our precious and happy attainments? Behold in the Bible the picture of the saint! His eyes are open to the glories of the Lord as revealed in his works and in his Word; his ears are in a listening attitude, that they may catch the faintest announcement of his will; his hands are in busy activity in his service, and his feet are running in the way of his commandments. Behold the picture, and say, do you resemble it? Among all the members of the household of faith there is a family likeness; is that likeness found in you? If you feel that it is not, it would be madness to conclude favourably of your state; but if you are sensible that it is, then your own spirits, at least, bear witness that you are the children of God.

The argument is accordingly evident, by which the believer is conducted to a favourable conclusion respecting his interest in Christ. When stated in the form of a syllogism, it will stand thus:—The child of God has faith, love, humility, zeal, devotedness, resignation, and all the other graces of the Spirit; but I have these attainments, therefore I am a child of God. The major proposition is founded upon the Scriptural delineation of Christian character, the minor, upon inward consciousness and daily experience, and the conclusion follows as a most obvious deduction from both.

Now the witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God, is *with* this witness of our spirits, and accompanies every step of the process. The Holy Spirit shines upon the page of his Word, that the likeness of the Christian, as there pourtrayed, may be seen in all its loveliness and beauty. And while he shines upon his work, in the revelation which he has inspired, he also shines upon his work in the soul, that the major and minor propositions of the syllogism may both appear in all the clearness and certainty of truth. But what has the Spirit to do in our drawing the conclusion from these premises? Is not our own common sense sufficient of itself to draw that conclusion? This cannot be denied; but yet there is sufficient room for the witness of the Spirit to accompany the witness of our spirits, not only over the first and second, but also over the third stage of the process, which terminates in the inference that we are the children of God.

Without entering, at present, into the philosophy of the subject, it may be simply stated as a fact, that a truth may be proved to our entire satisfaction, and yet, owing to some disease of the mind, although we cannot refuse our assent, we may be far from experiencing a thorough persuasion of the whole heart and soul, and a persuasion which will appear in our conduct. Demonstrate to a fornicator or a drunkard the error of his ways, show him that he is on the high road to hell so long as he persists in his mad career, and he will admit the truth of all you say, and really think that he believes it all. But while he has reached all the certainty which proof can give, there is another kind of conviction or persuasion which he has not gained, otherwise he would instantly fly from his wicked course. It is one thing to yield the assent of the understanding to a truth which is regarded as fully established, and another thing so to feel it as to act upon it in opposition to all contrary tendencies. Proof can do the former, but demonstration itself may not succeed in accomplishing the latter. The believer, therefore, may know the marks of the Christian laid down in the Bible, and he may be conscious that these marks are found in himself; so that, admitting both the premises of the argument, his judgment will instantly lead him to a satisfactory conclusion; and yet he may be far from that hearty persuasion of his sonship and his heirship, which will triumph over all his fears. Here, then, the Holy Spirit comes in, in the third stage of the process. We have supposed the Christian fully convinced of the major proposition of the syllogism, and we have conceived him equally satisfied of the truth of the minor, so that he instantly reaches the proper conclusion. His certainty, however, is nothing more than that which the witness of his own spirit affords, and it requires the co-operating witness of a higher Spirit, to carry it forward to that thorough conviction of the whole soul which has been called assurance of faith. This co-operating witness the Holy Ghost bestows, in a less or a greater degree, on the people of God, confirming the testimony of their own consciences, animating their hopes, and bearing them over their doubts and fears.

Christians, do you wish to know your interest in the Saviour? Search the Scriptures that you may discover the true likeness of the saint, and pray that the Spirit may be sent to guide you in the search. Examine your own hearts and lives, and beseech the same most necessary guidance from above, that you may ascertain how far you resemble that likeness. And

having thus been furnished with the premises required, beseech that the Spirit may accompany you to a correct conclusion, and lead you to such a persuasion of its truth, as will influence your thoughts, your feelings, and your lives. Instead of waiting in indolent supineness for some supernatural whisper to the soul to command your fears away, let your own spirits awake to the momentous investigation of your state and your prospects. And let it be your earnest prayer, that the Spirit of all truth may so work in the workings of your minds, and so testify in their testimony, that, like the early Christians, you may know yourselves to be the children of God.

ARCHIPPUS.

HINTS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION.

IN what frame of mind did I awake this morning, and how did I commence, and continue the duties of this day?

Have I set the Lord constantly before me? Did I live as in his presence, committing myself and all my concerns to him? Did I implore and look for direction? Do I feel and realize my relation to him, as my Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer?

Do I love him, and pant after a conformity to him in purity and holiness? Have I regarded his commands and will, as the rule of my life and actions; and have my spirit and temper been conformed to, and regulated by this rule? Have I been thankful for God's mercies, temporal and spiritual? Have I felt my dependence, and acknowledged my obligations? Have I been patient under trials, resigned to crosses and afflictions? Have I had regard to the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of his cause, in my whole deportment—as in food, raiment, employment, conversation, &c.?

Have I considered my relation to the church of God, and endeavoured to live answerable thereto, by avoiding improper tempers, words, and actions? Have my temper and conduct been exemplary—such as I should be willing to have my friends and neighbours copy and follow?

Do I pray for the peace and prosperity of the church? Do I grieve for its trials, and rejoice in its felicity? Have I a tenderness and love for my Christian brethren? Am I willing to assist, and be assisted by them, by mutual cares and labours of love? Do I love and attend the means of grace, of a private, social, and public nature? and with what spirit?

What are my domestic relations? Have I considered and duly attended to these relations, and the duties growing out of them? Do I love and honour my parents? Do I discharge my duty to my companions and children?—to all others connected with me? Do I consider their tempers, habits, and circumstances, and endeavour to be accommodating, tender, and useful? Do I strive to do good to their bodies—their souls—their interests—their characters? Whom have I offended? Who has offended me? What are my present feelings toward them? What is my duty to them?

Have I considered my state and station in life, as being providentially ordered for my good, for God's glory, and the benefit of my fellow creatures? How, and wherein, can and do I answer these important ends? What duties have I omitted? What will be the consequence of such omission? How can I better improve my time—my talents—my means and influence?

Have I considered that the Holy Scriptures are sufficient to instruct me in all the above truths and duties; and have I read them with humility, prayer, and faith, to be guided in the will of God? Do I delight in them, and try to learn wisdom therefrom? Do I not fall far short of the standard of Christian piety contained in them? Should I not now be penitent, and fervently pray for pardon, grace, and holiness? Lord, direct and assist me to give myself to Thee.

ON THE APPROPRIATE USE OF THE BIBLE IN COMMON EDUCATION.

An Essay prepared for the American Lyceum.

BY THOMAS SMITH GRIMKE.

EVERY question which respects influences that act on the community at large, is of immense consequence in our age, and especially in our country. We readily comprehend that, in Europe, such matters would be viewed with jealousy and apprehension by government, and indeed by all in Church and State, who are attached by interest, prejudice, and fear, to existing forms and institutions. But in our country, where religious bigotry and superstition, political tyranny and persecution are unknown; where the people *are*, and *own*, and *do* every thing, the progress of society is among the greatest of popular interests, among the highest of popular duties. The advance-

ment of society in religion—pure, humble, enlightened; in knowledge—practical, useful, benevolent; is then an obligation laid upon every man by the constitution of our state of society; and above all, on those whom God has endued with talents, has blessed with opportunities for their cultivation, and has honoured with the authority of public stations, or the influence of private example. To be insensible to these truths, is not to realize that every man, however elevated or lowly, is one of the people, and that he has duties to perform to all the rest—duties commensurate with his capacity and means. To educate the people, then, is the great duty which is laid upon every one; for it is the most powerful and durable of all the instruments which can be employed to carry forward the advancement of society in virtue and knowledge as the fountains of prosperity and happiness.

Education being then of such vast importance, it must be obvious that, as common education is all that the great majority ever attain, it cannot too deeply interest us. Nor is it less manifest that, of all seminaries of instruction, *common schools* surpass all others in actual value, both present and prospective. So far, indeed, do I regard them as excelling all others, in the necessity for their existence, and the momentous character of their influence, that were the alternative presented, of a complete universal system of common schools, without universities, colleges, and scientific and literary academies, or the reverse, these without those, I should not hesitate a single moment to choose those, and lose all of these. And I should do it, not only on the ground that those were incomparably more valuable to the *people*, but on the farther ground, that the school system would produce the college system more rapidly, extensively, and effectually, than this could produce that. The college system has been at work for centuries, and has never yet produced the school system, either in Europe or America. The most remarkable illustration of the school system, furnished by modern countries, (for who, on such a question, would wander into antiquity) is to be found in New England; and there the *school* system is the *basis* of all their institutions, civil and political, literary and religious. Their school system has them the freest, happiest, and most enlightened *community* that ever existed. Their colleges have not, and never could have, accomplished it alone.

I regard the school system, then, as an object of primary importance in our country; and proceed to consider how the Bible can be most appropriately used as a part of the system.

The mode of stating the subject concedes that the Bible is to be adopted into the general scheme, as an important branch of it. Whilst the value of the instrument is admitted, the most skilful and effectual mode of employing it is suggested as a matter of doubt and important inquiry. I shall endeavour to remove the doubt, and satisfy the inquiry.

If the same question respected any other text book employed in a course of instruction, "How can it be most appropriately used?" is it not obvious that the answer is to be found in the relation which the book itself bears to the improvement of mankind in knowledge and virtue? Now, no other book stands in so many and so important connexions with the advancement both of the individual and of society. It relates to man both in time and eternity, in public and private life, in every station of duty and usefulness, amidst all the changes and chances of happiness and misery, of prosperity and adversity. It applies to him universally, whether we consider the enlightenment of his conscience, or the improvement of his understanding, the cultivation of his affections, or the formation of his character. Shall we not then employ it, as we employ other valuable works for the instruction of the young? Assuredly this must be the right course.

First.—Let us then bring the Bible to bear upon the *memory*. I regard the Scriptures, if I may use the expression, as *the Grammar of all Education*. It is to the duties, business, and pleasures of life, what a grammar is to the acquisition and use of a language. A thorough and minute acquaintance with its grammar is indispensible to rapid and efficient progress; and the first step is to treasure up in the memory its peculiar and important elements. The same is equally true of the Bible. Regarding it as the only safe and genuine text book of duty and usefulness, I hold it to be clear that it ought to be a daily exercise in common schools to commit some portions of it to memory. The simplicity and peculiarity of the style, aided by the division into chapters and verses, render it decidedly easier than to commit any other species of prose. If a familiar acquaintance with, and ready recollection of the elements of his text books, be valuable to the statesman and lawyer, the physician and scholar, must not the same be equally true of the Christian; and, indeed, still more so, as he has at stake interests so much more important? To illustrate; who has ever had occasion to speak about the Constitution of the United States, or to hear it spoken of, without being sensible how great would have been the acquisition to have known it

by heart? I regard the Gospel of John as the Constitution of the Christian Church, and would therefore have it committed to memory entire; and how easily and speedily this could be done is apparent from the fact, that the 879 verses, at the rate of only ten verses per day, would occupy 88 days; but allowing one day of every week for reviewing, and four days for regular lessons, the whole could be accomplished in twenty-two weeks. In like manner, the whole of the four gospels, containing 3781 verses, would be accomplished in less than two years, allowing fifteen verses as the average lesson throughout the whole period, taking four days to each week, and thirty-nine study weeks, or 156 study days to each year, thus excluding one day for reviewing, one for holiday, and one as the Sabbath, and laying aside thirteen weeks for vacation. Add a half year more, and in two years six months, the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles would be acquired.

It is not too much to say, that such an acquisition to the memory would be of inestimable value. I take for granted, of course, that a large portion of it would be permanently retained, but the most important and interesting passages would be preserved entire; such as the sermon on the mount, the conversation with Nicodemus, the resurrection of Lazarus, the prodigal son, the good Samaritan, &c. &c. Can any Christian possibly doubt the value of such an acquisition, under all the possible circumstances of life? I feel assured that every sensible man, though not a professing Christian, will not question it, if he is impartial and candid enough to admire the beauty of holiness, the dignity of a religious life, and the usefulness of Christian virtues.

Second.—Having thus stored the memory, and even, during the same period of time, we may employ the Scriptures advantageously in their *first* great relation to man, viz. as a means for the *cultivation of the affections.* These are among the safeguards of duty, and among the incentives to usefulness. To cherish, develope, refine, and strengthen them, on the Christian model, is surely the dictate of Christian love, duty, and wisdom. And how can this best be accomplished? It seems to me, by illustrating all the affections by familiar anecdotes taken from the lives of Christians, children, and youth, men and women. We have text books of chemistry, geometry, logic, and mathematics, and why should we not have a "*Scripture text book of the Affections,*" full of such illustrations? The man who should prepare such a work, in simple, plain language, for the use of common schools, would be a Christian benefactor of his

country, and would himself exemplify in such a deed, the great Christian law of love. Let us take, in order to illustrate the value of such a collection, the single text, "Love your enemies." Who is not sensible of the importance of counteracting, steadily and carefully, the opposite tendency, so deeply seated in our nature, and unhappily fostered and strengthened by such a vast amount of influence in every community? Who does not see, that where so little is to be found in favour of the maxim in the individual, social, or national conduct, the young mind should be pre-occupied, and the memory filled with remarkable and affecting instances of love to enemies, not taken from the lives of the great, but from the walks of common life? Will any one doubt the influence of these over the youthful mind; and that many and many a man thus guarded and fashioned, would be self-admonished, and saved in time of temptation? Let us go in like manner through the whole circle of the affections, and we shall be satisfied that a series of such practical illustrations would be of inestimable value in purifying, elevating, refining, and strengthening the affections. In such a work I would not insert any thing, as most compilers of school books are fond of doing, from the pagan records of Greece and Rome. This I should do, not because I cannot admire such instances in the history of Athens and Rome, but because I would illustrate the Gospels only out of the lives of Christians; believing, as I do, that a sure way to degrade Christian morals, and to induce a vague, practical belief that they are not much better than pagan morals, is to intermix the experimental influence of heathens, in this seductive form, with that of Christians. I have no doubt that this is one of the numerous and powerful causes that render the formation of Christian character so difficult.

Third.—The *second* great relation in which the Scriptures stand to men, is *the enlightenment of the conscience.* The purity, strength, and beauty of the affections, when christianized, undoubtedly impart to the character a refinement and loveliness unknown to any other system. And so, when the sense of duty is christianized, and all the principles of conduct are referred to the Christian standard, the energy, dignity, and consistency of the character are of the highest order. Who then can hesitate in acknowledging the Scriptures as the richest fountain of duty, indeed the only one that ought to be acknowledged or admitted into the schools of Christian countries, and, in my opinion, into their colleges and universities; for I should

never think of Cicero's offices, of Epictetus, Seneca, or Antonius, as text books of duty, where the Gospel was the *Moral Common Law* of the land. Is the question asked, how would you employ the Scriptures in teaching duty? The answer is plain, by precept and example. I would have a "*Scripture Text Book of Duties*," as of all the various affections. Under each head should be embraced illustrations from the lives of Christians, of the nature, importance, and obligation of each duty. Every anecdote should be followed by practical reflections, suited to that particular instance; and all of the examples under any one head, by a more enlarged view of the duty. The whole work should then close with a clear, full summary of Christian duty, gathered from the whole body of precepts and examples, contained in the preceding pages.

Shall I be asked what such "A Text Book of the Affections," and such "A Text Book of Duties," would have to do with the use of the Bible in common schools? I answer, that all the important texts, and especially entire passages, should be embodied in each work in suitable places; so that the volume would contain every thing in the Bible on the subject of each particular affection or duty. This might be done either by a reference, or by extracting the passage. The latter I should prefer; though it would extend the size of the work.

The Text Books of Duty and Affection I would make subject of lessons, not to be *memorized*, but to be *thoroughly studied and understood*. The scholar should be required, throughout a particular, daily examination, to exhibit proof that he had mastered the facts, and comprehended the principles. This duty ought to be performed, not in the mode in which similar duties are too often performed by scholars and teachers; but in a manner commensurate to the importance of the subject. The very character of such a work would carry with it an authority unknown to ordinary works.

Fourth.—But the Scriptures not only stand in this twofold relation to the duties and affections of man, but they stand in a *third* very important relation to their *opposites*. Hence the propriety and necessity for "*A Scripture Text Book of the Passions and Vices*," to be contrasted with all the various duties and affections illustrated in the other two volumes. The arrangement of this might correspond to that of the other two, so that the first part might be devoted to the illustration of the passions opposite to the affections; and the second to that of the vices, as contrasts of the duties. The principles on which

this book ought to be constructed, would be the same as in the two preceding, with respect to the use of Scripture, to the examples, to the practical, preceptive explanations, and to the summary at the end.

ROBERT HALL'S FIRST SERMON.

He was appointed, agreeably to the arrangement already mentioned, to deliver an address in the vestry of Broadmead Chapel, on 1 Tim. iv. 10, "Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men; especially of those that believe." After proceeding for a short time, much to the gratification of his auditory, he suddenly paused, covered his face with his hands, exclaimed, "Oh! I have lost all my ideas," and sat down, his hands still hiding his face. The failure, however, painful as it was to his tutors, and humiliating to himself, was such as rather augmented than diminished their persuasion of what he could accomplish, if once he acquired self-possession. He was therefore appointed to speak again on the same subject, at the same place the ensuing week. This second attempt was accompanied by a second failure, still more painful to witness, and still more grievous to bear. He hastened from the vestry; and on retiring to his room, exclaimed, "If this does not humble me, the devil must have me!" Such were the early efforts of him whose humility afterwards became as conspicuous as his talents, and who, for nearly half a century, excited universal attention and admiration by the splendour of his pulpit eloquence.—*Gregory.*

DUTY OF IMMEDIATE REPENTANCE.

Every one who is old enough to commit sin, is old enough to repent. Children should think of this. They mistake when they suppose that they are too young to repent and love the Saviour. Are children too young to love and obey their parents? When they disobey their parents, are they too young to be sorry for their conduct? Certainly not. Every child knows this. Every child who is old enough to disobey God, is old enough to repent. Many children, when they think seriously upon their sins, mean to repent of them by and by; but they are not quite ready now.

The writer recollects, when he was a boy, that he often felt

the importance of repenting of his sins. He was so impressed with this subject, at times, that he could not sleep at night. He would weep, and feel very unhappy. Yet he was not willing to give up his vain pleasures. He recollects, very well, that a few days before an election day, (which used to come on the last Wednesday in May,) the importance of repenting was deeply impressed on his mind. He was almost resolved to seek religion by repentance. But then he thought of the election and its vain pleasures. He did not know what to do. Finally, he promised himself, that he would repent and love God after election had gone by.

It makes me tremble, my young friends, while I am writing, to think what I did. When the Spirit called me to repent, I put him off. How guilty was this! What wonder that he had not left me forever!

You may inquire, whether the writer did repent, as he promised to do. The long wished for day came; he engaged in his amusements. He thought he enjoyed himself; but, when night came, he felt as if he had been labouring for nought. When he thought of his promise he felt unhappy. He was not inclined to do as he had promised, but sought to forget it.

I have related this, my young readers, that you may think how vain and wrong it is, that you should put off repentance. You may suppose that you can repent by and by, just as well as now. Suppose you could, *(though this may not be,)* you cannot have so much enjoyment in doing wrong, as you can in repenting of your sins and loving the Saviour. *There is no lasting pleasure in doing wrong.* Mark this; there is no lasting pleasure in doing *wrong*. Should you put off repentance until a certain time, when that time arrives (if it should arrive; for sometimes children die before the time arrives in which they mean to repent,) you may not then be ready. You will, most probably, be disposed to put off repentance still. This is the way that a great many destroy their souls. If you wish to be happy, *never delay any duty which you know you ought to do.* Ought you not, young reader, *to repent of your sins* NOW!

ESPOUSAL TO CHRIST.

COME, virgins, will you give me leave to be a suitor unto you, not in my own name, but in the name of the Lord!

O! that I may prevail with you for your affections, and persuade you to give them unto Christ.

Consider who the Lord Jesus is, whom you are invited to espouse yourselves unto; he is the best husband; there is none comparable to Jesus Christ.

Do you desire one that is great? He is one of the highest dignity, he is the glory of heaven, the darling of eternity, admired by angels, dreaded by devils, and adored by saints. For you to be espoused to so great a king, what honour will you have by this espousal?

Do you desire one that is rich? None is comparable to Christ, the fulness of the earth belongs to him. If you be espoused to Christ, you shall share in his unsearchable riches; you shall receive of his fulness, even grace for grace here, and you shall be hereafter admitted to glory, and shall live with this Jesus to all eternity.

Do you desire one that is wise? There is none comparable to Christ for wisdom. His knowledge is infinite, and his wisdom is correspondent thereto. And if you are espoused to Christ, he will guide and counsel you, and make you wise unto salvation.

Do you desire one that is potent, who may defend you against your enemies, and all the insults and reproaches of the Pharisees of this generation? There is none that can equal Christ in power; for the Lord Jesus Christ hath all power.

Do you desire one that is good? There is none like unto Christ in this regard; others may have some goodness, but it is imperfect; Christ's goodness is complete and perfect, he is full of goodness, and in him dwelleth no evil.

Do you desire one that is beautiful? His eyes are most sparkling, his looks and smiles are most delightful and refreshing unto the soul; Christ is the most lovely person of all others in the world.

Do you desire one that can love you? None can love you like Christ; his love, my dear sisters, is incomprehensible; his love passeth all other loves; the love of the Lord Jesus is first, without beginning; his love is free without any motive; his love is great without any measure; his love is constant without any change, and his love is everlasting.

It was the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, my dear sisters, which brought him down from heaven; and which veiled his divinity in a human soul and body; for he is God over all, blessed for ever; it was love that made him subject to hunger, thirst and sorrow; he was humbled even unto death for you;

for you who are espoused to him, he underwent the painful, shameful, and ignominious death of the cross; and can you, my sisters, hear this, and not be concerned to think that the blessed Jesus underwent all this for such sinful creatures as you and I are? And when out of love he had finished the redemption on earth, as to what was needed for satisfaction; it was his love that carried him back to heaven, where he was before, that he might make application of what he had purchased, that there he might make intercession for those whom he had redeemed, and prepare a place for them, even glorious mansions with himself, in the house not made with hands, which is eternal in the heavens. It is out of love that he sendeth such tokens to his people from heaven to earth, which he conveyeth through his ordinances, by his Spirit unto them. Surely, then, none is so deserving as the Lord Jesus Christ for you to espouse yourselves unto; if you be espoused unto Christ he is yours, all that he is, all that he hath; you shall have his heart, and share in the choicest expressions of his dearest love.

The Lord Jesus Christ, my dear sisters, doth beseech you to be his spouse. We ministers have a commission from the Lord Jesus Christ, to invite you, in his name, unto this very thing; and Christ's invitations are real, general, frequent, earnest, free.

Christ's invitations of you, to be his spouse, are *real;* and, as the thing is real, so you, my dear sisters, are really invited unto it. The Lord doth not mock and dissemble with you, as some pretending lovers, who dissemble love unto virgins, until they have gained their affections, and then falsely and basely relinquish them, never really intending either to espouse or marry them; but the Lord doth really intend the thing, in his invitations of you; he never cast off any whose consent and affections he had gained. Again,

Christ's invitations of you, my dear sisters, are *general.* All of you are invited, none of you are excluded; all sorts of sinners are invited; the most vile and abominable sinners, the most notorious transgressors are invited to be Christ's spouse, and shall be as welcome as any unto the embraces of his love.

Christ's invitations of you are *frequent;* Jesus Christ calls on you frequently; he hath waited on you time after time, one year after another; and he doth now invite you, by me this day, to come unto him. Do not slight this invitation, but receive it with joy and thankfulness. Come, I beseech you, to this Jesus, who thus invites you to be his spouse. Again,

Christ's invitations to be his spouse are *earnest*; he doth call upon you, and not only call, but call earnestly too; yea, he useth many arguments with you; he will press you to come unto him; he is loth to take any denial from you; he knocks, and knocks hard at the door of your hearts for entertainment; and surely you will not deny the Lord of life and glory who died for you, and gave himself for you; oh, my dear sisters, let this be the evening of your espousals to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He invites you *freely* to be his spouse, for all his invitations are free; he doth not expect a portion with you, as worldly lovers do; he wants nothing of you: nay, you must have nothing if you be espoused unto the Lord Jesus Christ. If you be poor, miserable, blind, naked, Jesus Christ will supply all these defects of his own free mercy; he will fill and supply you with all things out of his treasury; he will make you meet for himself; he will prepare you to live with him for ever.

Consider, if you be once espoused unto Christ, if once joined in this relation, you shall never be separated from him; neither men nor devils shall be able to separate you; none, none shall disjoin you; and when death doth break all other bonds, it shall not break the conjugal bond between you and Christ, but bring you unto the most full and everlasting possession of your beloved.

And what do you now say, young women? shall I have a grant for my master, or be sent away with a repulse and refusal? Shall this be the day of your espousals? Some of you have staid a long time, and will you defer any longer? Receive him upon his own terms, and he is yours for ever. O devote yourselves to him, soul, and body, and all, to be his for ever; and Christ will be yours, and then happy, happy you, that ever you were born! But if any of you die before this espousal unto the Lord Jesus Christ, then wo, wo, unto you, that ever you had a being in life; but if you go to Christ, you shall be espoused unto the Lord Jesus; though your sins have been never so great, yea, the blood of Christ will cleanse you from them; the marriage covenant between Christ and your souls will dissolve all your sins; you will then be weary of your old ways, for all things will become new in your souls.—*Whitefield.*

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

"The merciful man is merciful to his beast."

A Society has been lately established in Belfast for preventing cruelty to animals. Its object is very laudable; and though some of the details in its publications are calculated to excite ridicule, yet it would be well for us to examine carefully whence this ridicule springs. We are accustomed to look on many of the lower animals as so very insignificant, and so very far below our benignant attention, that any minute provision for their comfort, or any accurate descriptions of their sufferings to excite compassion, only excite a smile. Now, let us for a moment examine this matter in the light of Christianity, and perhaps we shall elicit something beneficial to the interests of the Society for preventing cruelty to animals. as well as to teach us humility and kindness, and also to glorify the great Creator.

Man was placed, it is true, at the head of creation, and animate creation was subjected to his rule; but, as universal lord, he has no right to treat with contempt, far less with cruelty, the subjects of his power. Every one of the creatures put in subjection to him, bears a heavenly impress of power, of wisdom, and of goodness; and he who insults or maltreats the creature, offends against the Creator. How knows proud man but there are beings in the golden, everlasting chain of intelligence, as far exalted above him as he is above the most degraded reptile; and how should he like to be treated by an archangel, as the poor worm and a thousand other beings are treated by him.

When we reflect on the great powers which man possesses, our hearts often so swell with pride, as to have no room for compassion or kindness to the animate creation below us. The coach driver despises the vengeful efforts of the horse, galled and maddened as he is by the foulest abuse; but how would such a man look in the paw of a hungry tiger, or when descending the throat of a white shark thirty feet long, which has been often known to swallow a man at a mouthful.

Man, proud of his strength, abuses it for torturing weak creatures, or creatures, whatever be their powers or capabilities, which have been put under his authority; yet, what is man, with all his muscles, in comparison with the caterpillar of a cosus, which has four thousand and sixty-one distinct muscles,

being ten times as many as belong to the whole human body; and what is his strength in comparison with that of the spumous grasshopper, the small animal which in its larve and pupe states discharges what is commonly called cuckoo spittle! Man boasts of the strength of his arm. I could find him a shell-fish like an oyster, (the clamp-fish), which, with one snap of its hinge, could cut his arm off. What a rout he keeps about his invention of navigation, and his launching out boldly into the wide, wide sea; but what was Columbus and his cowardly crew to the bold nautilus, which, without compass, lifted its mast and sail to the wind, and committed itself fearlessly to the wild wave, before ever Tyre or Sidon had a being. Torricelli is a great name of which poor human nature is proud, and why? Because he made discoveries about a vacuum. Pooh! the common leech, and other sucker worms, knew all about vacuums five thousand years before Torricelli was born; for the way in which they have moved ever since the creation, is by alternately converting the muscular disks of their head and tail into air pumps.

Man is proud of his wisdom, but let him not, therefore, despise the wild duck, which, after spending its summer among the woods and lakes of Lapland, can come at the fit season, and in the right course, across the pathless fields of air, so as regularly to arrive on our coast in the beginning of October. What a long bow the traveller draws about the long journeys he has taken; let him stop a minute, and hear that the common herring has been where he never was, and travelled farther than he ever did, and that under water too.

It is an old saying, that if you want to beat a dog, you will easily find a stick; don't beat him, however, till I tell you a story about him, and then don't beat him at all. A Newfoundland dog was taken from Plymouth to London by sea, and having got loose, he went direct home at a rapid pace, though having never travelled the road before. I know a dog which was taken from a house near Donaghadee, across Strangford lough, to the centre of the County Down, and having taken offence, a short time afterwards, for being shut out at night, he set off, and was found next morning sitting at the door from which he was at first taken, having travelled eighteen miles on an entirely unknown road, for he could not possibly have crossed at night the ferry at Strangford.

No doubt man is highly exalted in privileges, pouring in upon him through no less than five different senses, but has he any reason, on that account, to despise even the humble bat,

which possesses, in addition to its five senses, the wonderful power of judging even in the dark, and in very rapid motion, when he approaches any thing; and this he can do even when his eyes have been entirely destroyed.

Man displays his wisdom by allaying, in the absence of food, the pangs of hunger, by tying something very tightly to compress his stomach, or by swallowing saw-dust, as the Kamschadales; but in this he is merely an imitator of carniverous beasts, which often swallow stones, coals, and similar substances, for the purpose of acquiring such a pressure as may blunt the sense of hunger.

How thoughtlessly and how wickedly does man inflict wounds on poor beasts, not reflecting what indescribable misery he himself suffers even from a mouthful of cold or hot water on the stump of an old tooth; but, though he too seldom shows mercy, yet his Father in heaven does, not only to man himself, but to the meanest creatures which are so often the subject of man's cruel torture.

If a man, for example, pulls a leg off a lobster, God gives it a new one; or if a little child, taught cruelty by a mother's example, pulls a limb off the insect, vulgarly called father-long-legs, it is very soon supplied with another. Vaillant took the intestines out of a locust which he wished to preserve, and filled the abdomen with cotton, fixing the animal down with a pin through its chest; yet at the end of five months it was alive. If a snail's head be cut off, it will, as is well known, be furnished with a new one.

Such facts, though necessarily connected with circumstances very abhorrent, nevertheless set in very strong contrast man's cruelty, and Gods tenderness and goodness.

Man's wisdom has taught him to arm himself against poisonous serpents by the use of certain herbs, so that either the serpents do not bite at all, or if they do, can effect scarcely any mischief; but this wisdom he has learned from some species of those very creatures over which he exercises such tyrannical sway. The serpent-hawk, which principally feeds on poisonous snakes, prepares itself for the conflict, by eating the ophiorrhiza plant; and the ibis, worshipped by the Egyptians, on account of the benefit which they derived from its destruction of reptiles, if wounded, immediately flies off to the plant which she knows is an antidote to the poison, and returning with renewed vigour, kills and devours her prey.

Whole nations boast of their admirable forms of government, the vigilance of their police, the wholesome and vigorous

administration of their laws; but let them not suppose that man alone enjoys such blessings. Even the humble bee is a member of a regularly organized community; and in a truly patriarchal style the old elephant is king over a whole tribe of his species, directing their marches and superintending the political community. Among the wild horses of the Ukraine, leaders are chosen for about four or five years each, at the end of which time a new election takes place, the old captain-general having the liberty of again offering himself for the vacant office. By different sounds and gestures these leaders give orders for the necessary dispositions and arrangements in their troops; and that they possess much variety in such modes of expression, must be evident to every one who has observed the different accents of the domesticated horse, under the influence of rage, desire, or exultation.

Such examples, given at random, cannot fail to elevate the lower animals in the opinion of the most brutal. I have no desire whatever of depreciating man's powers, or of dethroning him from his high place as lord of creation; but I wish him to form a proper estimate of the powers, the honours, and the uses of the animals by which he is surrounded, as well as of the gratitude which he owes them. I wish him to remember that they are evidences of God's power, and wisdom, and goodness; and that he is not a merciful man who is not merciful to his beast. He who wantonly tortures even a fly, is serving an apprenticeship to cruelty, which may soon fit him for becoming the torturer of his own species. To sport with feelings or with life is a dangerous and desperate sport; brutality to brutes has a demoralizing, case-hardening influence; and every man who sees a poor animal abused, should consider himself personally interested, for he knows not but he may himself be the next victim. I should have no confidence in committing the safe-keeping of my throat to either a dog-fighter or cock-fighter. Each dog-fighter or cock-fighter is a murderer in embryo. Let but some burst of passion, or some glass of whiskey break the shell, and the young chick walks forth blood-thirsty and fierce, and ready, at a word, to take the life of his own brother. Let us, therefore, shun every approach to cruelty, and cultivate that charity which suffereth long and is kind, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

A.

A FRIENDLY ADDRESS TO PARENTS AND HEADS OF FAMILIES.

BY A LAYMAN.

[We cheerfully insert the following document, hoping that it may induce professing Christians to be more attentive to the important and delightful exercise of family worship. We often wonder that parents and heads of families, who have taken on them the vows of God, can live in prayerless houses. God classes "*the families* that call not on his name" with "*the heathen.*" Let such attend to the following "Friendly Address."—EDIT.]

IT is a most melancholy truth, that in our day and generation the worship of God is so very much neglected in the families of many professing Christians, who make high pretensions to things pertaining to life and godliness. I cannot see how such persons can be called *true believers*, as they are not observing "all things that are commanded them;" and, as Family Worship is a duty clearly laid down to us in God's Holy Word, which we profess to take as the rule of our faith and practice, surely there are abundant reasons for the head of every family to call his children and servants together in the morning, to thank their bountiful and kind Preserver for having spared them in peace and in safety through the silent watches of another night, for permitting them to see the light of another day, and for the innumerable blessings, both temporal and spiritual, with which they are so richly loaded; and in the evening, before laying themselves down to repose, to again collect the household around the family altar, and then commend themselves to Him who "keepeth Israel," and who "neither slumbers nor sleeps." The Scriptures abound with encouragements to call upon God by prayer and supplication. In Ezekiel xxxvi. 37, it is said—"I will be inquired of by the house of Israel, that I may do it for them;" and God has promised to bestow upon us "more and better blessings than we can either ask or conceive of," and while we are speaking he has promised to hear and answer us. In Deut. iv. 29, it is written—"But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him if thou seek Him with all thy soul;" and in Lam. iii. 25, it is said—"The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him."

Now, let me address a word to parents, to whom God in his good providence has given children, and children, too, for

whom they must one day render a very awful account, if they do not strive to train them up in the fear and love of God. Read what Paul says in his epistle to the Ephesians vi. 4—"And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and in Deut. vi. you will find a long exhortation to obedience in the 6th and 7th verses—"And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up;" also, in Deut. xi. 18—22. there is a most delightful rehearsal of the same; and in the lxxviii. Psalm, 4th verse—"We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord," &c.; verse 6—"That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise, might declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God." Now, do do not all parents who live in the entire neglect of singing God's praise, reading His Word, and calling on Him by prayer, do their part to hide the counsel of God from their children, and to prevent the handing down of these things to their children's children. Solomon says, in Prov. xxii. 6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

If family religion be a duty incumbent on every professing Christian parent, and if it be a *privilege which your children have a right to claim at your hands*, surely love to their never-dying souls should constrain you *not to deprive them of their birthright*. If you do, they certainly will rise up in judgment against you. Farther, bear in mind the very solemn engagement you entered into, and the vows you came under, when, publicly, you dedicated them to the Lord in baptism—when you promised, in the sight of God, angels and men, to set before them a godly example, and to bring them up in the fear of the Lord. Now, is it less criminal to break your covenant with God, than to break your engagement with men? or is it so that you entered into those vows and engagements with the express intention of never fulfilling them? If so, you are both unsteadfast and perfidious in his covenant.

If, now, you have been led by the blessing of God to see how far you have departed from the path of duty, and thus separated yourselves from God, in setting at nought his counsels and despising his ordinances, let me most earnestly beseech you

to *act with decision;* a want of decision in anything is bad, but worst of all in matters of such vast importance; and remember—to be lukewarm is a very dangerous state. Rev. iii. 16, "So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth;" and in 1 Kings xviii. 21, "And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him;" and in Joshua xxiv. 15, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you, this day, whom ye will serve."

Many are still living in the neglect of this duty, who may think that, at some future period, or some more convenient time, they will erect the family altar to God. Now I would ask such, upon what principle do they expect to be more willing at any future time, when they are positively unwilling now; or what assurance have they of living to any future time? Is it not an established truth, that the longer we continue in the neglect of any known duty, we become the more hardened in iniquity; and, consequently, at a greater distance from God. Now let those who are fast travelling on to their latter end—and in all human probability near to it—meditate on this, and see how it places them; they are fast nearing their eternal destiny, and still farther and farther from God. But suppose that such a period as they hope for should arrive, may not God justly say to them, as is written in Prov. i., "Because I have called and ye have refused; because I stretched out my hand and no man regarded; therefore will I laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

Read some of the *very awful denunciations* that are recorded in the Scriptures against those who neglect this duty:—In Jer. x. 25, it is written, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name;" and in Psalm lxxix. 6, "Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called on thy name; also, look at what is written in Prov. i. from 24th verse to the end; and in Isaiah i. 15, "And when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear; your hands are full of blood." Also, in Jer. xi. 11, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, behold I will bring evil upon them which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them;" and in Ezek. viii. 18, "Therefore will I also deal in fury; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry

in mine ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them;" also in Micah iii. 4, "Then shall they cry unto the Lord and he will not hear them; he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings;" and in Zech. vii. 13, "Therefore, it came to pass that as he cried and they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts." Now do not such passages of Scripture show us there will come a time when of necessity you must cry unto God? Kiss, therefore, the Son, "lest he be angry with you when there is none to deliver;" and surely if it be good at all to "draw nigh unto God," we cannot do so too soon. And let me remind you of your accountability to God for every talent and privilege you enjoy; and that it is your bounden duty to "seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near." Listen to the Psalmist's death-bed advice to his beloved son, Solomon, and keep in mind his vast Christian experience; and hence his capability of judging what was best. In 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, "And thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever." And read what this son, to whom David gave the above advice, says in Prov. i. 24—33; and also read very attentively what is written in Daniel's Prophecy, vi. from 10th verse to the end, and you will see the high estimate he put upon this very duty, for which he willingly hazarded his life rather than relinquish it even for a short time. Now I will only bring before you the resolution of Joshua the High Priest, who resolved, in the midst of a stiff-necked and perverse generation, that "as for him and his house they would serve the Lord."

Now, when we consider that praise shall be the prevailing theme of all the redeemed, through the ages of eternity, to Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in His own blood; and if we believe, as we must do, that if ever we are to form part of that happy company who surround the throne, we must be in some degree assimilated while here on earth, as it would not be consistent with a holy and jealous God to admit those to the enjoyment of the upper sanctuary who had no relish or delight in His service here below. We can only judge of things by outward signs and fruits, and we cannot help saying, that the family who never present the incense of the evening and morning sacrifice, do not bear the

marks of those who delight in the law of the Lord, nor of hearts burning with devout and holy aspirations towards Him. Psalm cxviii. 15—

> "In dwellings of the righteous
> Is heard the melody
> Of joy and health: the Lord's right hand
> Doth ever valiantly."

A word, now, to those who do observe this very delightful and important duty. Let them ask themselves, as in the sight of a heart-searching God, are they sincerely desirous to receive all the blessings they plead for, or do they not often find themselves in a very lifeless and cold state with regard to what should concern them. How ready are they to allow very trifling occurrences to prevent their assembling around the family altar? I think Christians are very much to blame in this. Perhaps the unexpected arrival of a neighbour or friend, or some unimportant hurry or press of business, hinders their morning devotion; or in the evening, perhaps they are late in coming home, or perhaps wearied and fatigued, and therefore have little desire for the service; or, what is worse than all, perhaps the very circumstance of their being unusually late returning home has arisen from indulging in the *cup of drunkenness!* Now is it so, that any who have made high and holy professions of religion, and who do wish to set a godly example before their family and children, and to make their light so shine before others, that those seeing their good works may glorify their Father who is in heaven—will there be found such men as will set aside that sweet communion and fellowship which is to be enjoyed with God in the path of duty, and cease to listen to the cries of an awakened and an accusing conscience, for an indulgence so beastly and destructive both to body and soul.

Another word to those who do observe this duty, *but too often allow the concerns of this world to draw a barrier between them and their God,* and who, by their practice, say they will not relinquish their hold of the common concerns of this world even for a few minutes. Now I would ask such men where have they any Scriptural authority for following the concerns of time with untiring and unceasing anxiety? or where have they any proof, from Scripture, that it is for their eternal welfare to do so? Or if they cannot satisfy themselves or others on these points, are they quite certain of success in the end, even as regards the things of this world? No, no! Are they able to succeed, even though God has declared in his Holy Word that all things shall work together for good to

them that love him, having the promise of the life that now is as well as that which is to come? Do not such men love the world too well, when they cannot think of parting with even a small portion of that time which is not their own, to seek that guidance and direction which cometh from God? Such hindrances and excuses evidently intimate that there is a want of that earnest and anxious desire to have that sweet and soul-refreshing communion and fellowship with God, in his ordinances, which those only who are his true and sincere followers enjoy.

In that passage in Daniel's Prophecy already referred to, we have a glorious instance of Daniel's determined *faithfulness in daily serving his God*, though he was deeply involved in business, and that too of much importance, since he was the Chief President in that great empire. If you read over that very interesting chapter, the 6th of Daniel's Prophecy, you will find that his enemies confessed that "they could find none occasion of fault against him, unless they do concerning the law of his God." Accordingly, these wicked men had him cast into the den of lions, because he daily called upon his God. Read in the 20th verse—"When the King came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel, and the King spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel! servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the King, O King! live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me, and also before thee, O King! have I done no hurt." Another instance of men not permitting the concerns of this world to stop their wonted communion with God, is in the Psalmist David, though king of a great nation, to which he paid peculiar attention, as you will find in 2d Sam. 6th chapter, 18th verse—"And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord;" verse 20, "Then David returned to bless his household."

Finally—Let all beware of *resting in duties*, for "when we have done all we can we are unprofitable servants, not having done more than was our duty to do." But, let us all be more concerned to live nearer to God in secret prayer, and in exercise of those duties he has appointed, and ever to remember the very high privilege we enjoy, in having our lot cast in a land of Gospel light and of liberty, where we can wor-

ship our God under our vine and fig-tree, none daring to make us afraid; and may we be ever concerned for those who are in the region and shadow of death, and daily plead with God that he would prosper that work which is his own, and hasten that time when all shall be brought to the knowledge and belief of the truth, as it is in CHRIST JESUS.

FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

"THE testimony of modern travellers in corroboration of the truth of prophecy, is one of the most interesting subjects for the student of the Bible. Dr. Keith's late volume (the plan, and some of the very execution of which is taken without acknowledgment from Bishop Newton), has presented this subject in a very striking light, and our new work, "The Bible is True," has performed this service for the young.

"Since the appearance of Keith's volume, a new work of travels has been published in Paris, which sheds still greater light on the predictions concerning Edom or Idumea. We allude to the journey of Messrs. Laborde and Linant in Arabia Petrea, only a portion of which had appeared when Dr. Keith wrote. Those travellers are represented to have known or cared nothing in their researches about the declarations of the prophets; and their testimony, like that of Volney, is the more remarkable on account of its unexpected coincidence with the Scriptures. The last London Quarterly Review gives the following instances, as astonishing proofs of the minuteness with which the prophets' words have been accomplished.

"Among the curses on the land uttered through Jeremiah, was this, "For lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and *despised among men.*" (xlix. 15.) Laborde not dreaming of the text, makes this involuntary comment.

"The Arabs give to the ruins a ridiculous and indecent name, as if to prove the fragility of human works there was only wanted, in addition to the injuries of time, *the derision of men.*"

"Dr. Keith was somewhat disconcerted that no travellers had mentioned that Isaiah's prophecy of the chief cities of Edom was literally fulfilled, which declares that thorns shall come up in her palaces, *nettles and brambles* in the fortresses thereof." And he mentions that a prickly tree is found there, which sufficiently meets the general language of the prediction. But

Laborde now says expressly, that the splendid ruins of Petrea, are "overgrown with *nettles and brambles.*"

"The most amazing of these unintended illustrations of the Bible, in the opinion of the Reviewer, is the following. The ruins of Edom are evidently of different ages, showing works as late as the time of Adrian. A sceptic might make this objection to the prophecy, as proving that the threatened judgments did not take place at the early period implied in the prophecies, but that the decay was the gradual effect of many centuries. But this very circumstance is explained by a reference to Malachi, which, but for this account of the travellers, would be obscure. He says, (i. 4, 5,)

"Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of Hosts, *They shall build, but I will throw down;* * * * and your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be merciful from the border of Israel.

"The later architecture," says the writer, "is thus not merely accounted for, but absolutely predicted; and we are told that the day should come when *our eyes should see this*, and that the Lord should be magnified—*not* from Israel—but from the *border* of Israel, where exactly this wonderful city stood."

NOTICE.

The Unity of the New Testament Church. A Sermon by the Rev. JOHN DILL, A.M., *Carnmoney.*

"The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul."—Acts iv. 32.

THIS is a very superior discourse—vigorous in sentiment, and rich and felicitous in illustration. The author has entered with much spirit and ability into the discussion of the subject, proving his attainments, as a Gospel minister, to be of a very high order.

His object is "To show that the primitive believers were 'of one heart and of one soul,'"—

"I. In their 'mutual faith' towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

"II. In their endearing communion in the ordinances of Christ.

"III. In their affectionate sympathy with one another's necessities, sorrows, and joys, as members of the family of Christ.

"IV. In their common zeal for the support and advancement of the cause of Christ."

These different topics the author has illustrated with much point and power, pressing on the heart and conscience the practical lessons which he has judiciously deduced from them. From the last division we present our readers with the following extract, as it bears particularly on the obligation of the churches to *united* and strenuous Missionary exertion:—

"*We are bound*, as a Church, with 'one heart and one soul,' to unite our prayers, our counsels, and our cheerful contributions, as the Lord has blessed us, for the advancement of the cause of Missions, which is the cause of Christ. *We are bound* to regard the conversion of the world to Christ, as an interest, second only to our own salvation. How, then, have we discharged this high obligation? Have we not reason to confess, with deep humility, that through a very long period of our history as a Church, we did nothing, absolutely nothing, for the public cause of Christ, as distinguished from our own peculiar and immediate interest. Forgetful at once of our Missionary origin, and of our Missionary object in this benighted land, we fell from our high estate, as a faithful witness for Christ, into the basest confederacy with noxious error and worldly corruption. But, blessed be God, that with the revival of a holier discipline, the Missionary spirit is also reviving among us. We are beginning to feel that the Church's duty must be co-extensive with the Church's commission—"Preach the Gospel to every creature." And yet we are only *beginning* to feel it. Have we indeed *fully* realized the weight of obligation, the strength of faith, the ardour of zeal, the labour of love, the liberality of offering, the perseverance of prayer, the union of heart, which this great duty implies? No! brethren, it cannot be, or as a Church we would have desired more, and expected more, and laboured more, and contributed more, and accomplished more for the public cause of Christ, than ever we have yet done. As a Church, how little indeed has been our concert in prayer, our union in council, our co-operation in active endeavour, or our fellowship in liberal offering for the advancement of this blessed cause! How miserably mean—how utterly unworthy of our resources, is our annual united contribution to the public service of Christ! Yet we have reason to rejoice that the Missionary spirit is gradually leavening our Church, and that from year to year, her united prayers, and councils, and energies are more and more directed to this great and glorious object. And surely to no higher, no holier ob-

ject can the unity of the Church be directed, than to lead an unbelieving world to the truth as it is in Jesus. Is not this the sublime import of the Saviour's intercessory prayer—'that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*'"

Reverence for the Bible.—The Bible must be read with reverence. It is to be remembered that it is the inspired revelation of the Lord God Almighty. This seems to be lamentably forgotten, even by many pious persons. We are so much accustomed to the sight of a Bible, that we are in danger of looking upon it merely as a common book. But every time we cast our eyes upon the sacred volume, our minds should be impressed with its character as a standing miracle of divine grace and mercy. "My heart standeth in awe of thy Word," said the royal Psalmist. This wondrous book bears upon its communications the evident impress of God; it carries with it divine authority; it is our rule of duty in this life, and the law by which we all shall be judged at the last day. "Thus saith the Lord, to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my Word." Nothing surely can be more unbecoming than to read the Word of God with an irreverent, careless, trifling mind.

HOME MISSION OF THE SECESSION CHURCH.

The Seventeenth Report of the Home Mission of the Presbyterian Secession Church, presented to the Synod in Belfast, July, 1836; with an Appendix, containing the Report for the preceding year, the publication of which has been hitherto prevented by unavoidable circumstances.

This is a valuable and interesting document. It augurs well for the development of the energies of the Presbyterian Secession Church. We are delighted to find that ministers and people are becoming alive to the importance and glory of the Missionary enterprize. The arrangements of the Committee of the Home Mission for the past year attest a refreshing spirit of vigour and activity. We allude particularly to the bold and successful step, for such we pronounce it, of establishing a second Secession congregation in Dublin; and to the appointment of a Missionary Agent, whose duty it shall be, among other objects, to organize and maintain Congregational Missionary Associations. A second Minister from our Church was needed in Dublin. The Rev. David Stuart has been persevering and inde-

fatigable in ministerial labours; but his hands will be strengthened, and the interests of evangelical religion eminently promoted by the co-operation of a brother clergyman of the same Church. We pray that God may send our infant congregation a pastor according to his own heart, to preach the glorious Gospel ably and faithfully, and by every "good word and work," to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

We congratulate the Mission Committee, and the Synod at large, on the appointment of the Rev. J. W. HUNTER to the office of Missionary Agent. The choice is judicious; and we have no hesitation in declaring our conviction that the result will fully realize the expectations of the Committee. Such an agency is well calculated to arouse our energies, as a church, to the great work which is opening up before us; and we trust that at no distant day it will be recounted as an important means, under God, in paving the way of the Presbyterian Secession Church to *a Foreign Mission of its own.* Why should we not have a Foreign as well as a Home Mission? We are terrified by impossibilities which do not exist. We tell the Secession Church in Ireland, that it is able, at this moment, to conduct a Mission to the Heathen! Let no heart despair of success. The day is coming, and truly it will be the commencement of a new and happy era among the descendants of the Erskines and Fishers in the North of Ireland.

In glancing over the stations occupied by the Home Mission, and considering the respectable and numerous attendance at many of them, we rejoice to think, that through the agents, supported in whole or in part from its funds, thousands hear the Gospel of our salvation who otherwise would not enjoy so precious an opportunity. The cause deserves—nay, demands to be liberally supported. Let ministers, and elders, and church members do their duty. If we value the Gospel, let us be instrumental in spreading the Gospel.

We are happy to be able to state, that *Curran* has not been abandoned, as is mentioned in the *Report.* On the contrary, the cause of Secession is steadily gaining ground in that promising Station.

DEATH.—It is our painful duty to record this month the death of the Rev. Joseph O'Reilly, for some years Minister of the congregation of Lisbellaw, in connexion with the Presbyterian Secession Church. He was a devoted servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose doctrines he published in his ministrations and adorned in his life. His death was not only peaceful, but triumphant. It afforded a happy illustration of the power of a "free, full, and everlasting salvation." We expect to furnish in our next number a sketch of the life of this good man, with some very interesting particulars, at present in our possession, respecting his last illness and dissolution.

James Wilson, 70, High-street, Belfast.